

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-3 and 6-14 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3 and 6 are amended by this response. Claims 1, 6, 9 and 12 are independent claims. Claims 7-14 are new claims.

Claim Objections

Claims 5 and 6 are objected to for having improper claim preambles. Claim 5 is cancelled, rendering this objection moot with respect to this claim. Claim 6 is amended to recite and claim an image correction program. Applicants respectfully request, in view of the above actions, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-6 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,987,535 to Matsugu et al. (hereafter "Matsugu"). Insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Matsugu discloses an image correction device (column 2, line 1) that corrects defects in local objects (column 10, line 62). Matsugu discloses additional digital camera features, including image acquisition (column 3, line 19), object detection (column 11, line 1), generating detection information (column 5, line 31), storing image and detection data (column 5, line 28 and line 60), using electronic watermarks to store information about the image within the image (column 14, line 63), and image correction (column 5, line 24 and line 44).

Matsugu specifically discloses creating incidental image data that includes size, shape, and position of a detected object so that a detected object may be read separately from a synthesized image and overlapped on that image as auxiliary data. Matsugu discloses that this feature eliminates the need to re-extract that object from the image to further process the object

(column 5, lines 31 to 51). Matsugu further discloses that incidental image data may be encoded into the image itself as a digital watermark (column 14, lines 63-64).

With respect to independent claim 1, the incidental image data disclosed by Matsugu does not include information about the steps taken to make image corrections, or about how to undo or repeat the correction steps taken with respect to the image data. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Matsugu does not disclose embedding “correction information [that] includes steps taken to make said correction so that the stored image data contains information to undo or repeat said correction,” into the image data as required by independent claim 1.

Independent claim 6 also recites the requirement that the “correction information includes steps taken to make said correction so that the stored image data contains information to undo or repeat said correction.” Applicants therefore respectfully submit that independent claim 6 is patentable over Matsugu for the same reasons as independent claim 1.

With respect to independent claims 9 and 12, Matsugu only discloses embedding a digital watermark into the existing image data, and does not teach or suggest an image correction device or program that “creates an additional margin around said image data” and embeds “correction information in said additional margin as an electronic watermark, ... wherein said correction information includes steps taken to make said correction so that said margin contains information to undo or repeat said correction” as required by both independent claims 9 and 12.

With respect to dependent claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Matsugu at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 1, 6, 9, and 12.

At least in view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

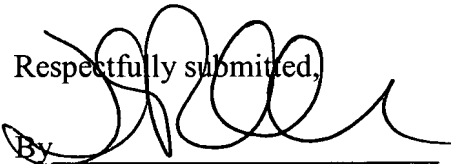
Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that claims are allowable.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact D. Richard Anderson, Reg. No. 40,439 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,


By
D. Richard Anderson
Registration No.: 40,439
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant